

Message Text

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ACTION AGRE-00

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EB-08 COME-00 CIAE-00 INR-10
NSAE-00 OMB-01 STR-07 /039 W
-----111757 291242Z /11

R 291107Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7261
INFO AMEMBASSY WARSAW
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY SOFIA

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PASS AGRICULTURE ELECTRONICALLY
WARSAW PASS AGATT FOR KELLY HARRISON
BONN PASS AGATT
SOFIA PASS KELLY HARRISON

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAGR, GE
SUBJ: AGATT INTRODUCTORY VISIT, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

REF: (A) BERLIN 2444 (NOTAL), (B) BERLIN 2531

1. SUMMARY: GDR MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE OFFICIAL MUENCH ACCORDED GOOD RECEPTION TO AGATT, WHO EXPLAINED AIMS OF HIS OFFICE. PROCEDURES DISCUSSED FOR SCHEDULING FUTURE MEETINGS ON SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSIONS OF AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES. GDR INTERESTED IN PROVIDING BASIC DATA FOR PURPOSE FAS MAGAZINE ARTICLES ON GDR AGRICULTURE AND OTHER REPORTS DESIGNED TO EXPAND UNDERSTANDING IN U.S. OF GDR AGRICULTURE. PROBLEM OF UNDERREPORTING IMPORTANCE OF AGRICULTURAL TRADE DISCUSSED. PRODUCTION OUTLOOK FOR WINTER GRAINS REMAINS GOOD; OUTLOOK FOR SPRING-PLANTED CROPS LESS PROMISING OWING TO COOL, DRY WEATHER. ARRANGEMENTS
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FOR AGRICULTURAL PLANNING AND MARKET DEVELOPMENT GROUP
VISIT COMPLETED. END SUMMARY

2. AGATT MET WITH DR. WERNER MUENCH, CHIEF, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS SECTION, AND GUENTER FRIEDRICH, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS SECTION, OF THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE ON THURSDAY, APRIL 27. ALTHOUGH AGATT

MET MUENCH DURING GRAIN CONSULTATION MEETINGS IN NOVEMBER 1977, THIS WAS FORMER'S FIRST OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE. THE MEETING HAD BEEN REQUESTED THROUGH THE MFA PROTOCOL SECTION MARCH 21.

3. AS IN PREVIOUS MEETINGS AT FOREIGN MINISTRY (REF. A) AND AT MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE (REF. B), AGATT WAS ASKED TO DESCRIBE PURPOSES AND FUNCTIONS OF HIS OFFICE. THIS WAS DONE WITH EMPHASIS PLACED UPON THE DESIRE TO IMPROVE TRADE RELATIONS AND TO RAISE THE MUTUAL LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE IN EACH COUNTRY ABOUT THE OTHER. IT WAS AGAIN POINTED OUT THAT FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL SERVICE (FAS) OF USDA MAINTAINS ATTACHES IN OVER 60 NATIONS, INCLUDING MOST KEY SOCIALIST NATIONS; THAT MANY VISITORS, BOTH GOVERNMENT AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL, WILL BE VISITING THE GDR FROM THE U.S. TO STUDY AGRICULTURE; AND THAT FAS STOOD READY TO ASSIST SIMILAR DELEGATIONS FROM THE GDR IN VISITING THE U.S. IT WAS EXPLAINED TO MUENCH THAT SUCH VISITS COULD INCLUDE CALLS ON APPROPRIATE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, VISITS TO RESEARCH FACILITIES SUCH AS THOSE AT GREENBELT, AND VISITS TO AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITIES.

4. THE AGATT RETURNED TO SUBJECT OF EXPANSION OF UNDERSTANDING. HE INDICATED THAT ONE MEANS WAS THROUGH REGULAR REPORTING ON AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES. IN UNCLASSIFIED

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ORDER TO OBTAIN DATA FOR REPORTS, HE SAID HE HOPED THAT MEETINGS COULD BE ARRANGED WITH APPROPRIATE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE EXPERTS IN VARIOUS COMMODITY FIELDS--CITING DAIRY, LIVESTOCK AND GRAINS AND FEEDS AS EXAMPLES OF AREAS WHICH HE WISHED TO STUDY DURING LATE SPRING AND EARLY SUMMER. MUENCH REPLIED THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THE NEED FOR SUCH MEETINGS BUT THAT THE PROPER CHANNEL FOR REQUESTING MEETINGS OF THIS TYPE WOULD, OF COURSE, BE THROUGH THE MFA PROTOCOL OFFICE. IT WAS AGREED THAT THE AGATT WOULD PREPARE A LETTER FOR PROTOCOL OFFICE REQUESTING A SERIES OF MEETINGS FOR THE YEAR AND NAMING THE SPECIFIC SUBJECTS OF INTEREST. MUENCH SAID MANY COUNTRIES REPRESENTED IN THE GDR WERE INTERESTED IN THE GDR AGRICULTURAL SITUATION, BUT THAT HE THOUGHT THAT SUCH MEETINGS COULD BE SET UP. HE ADDED THAT "STATISTISCHES JAHRBUCH" AND "STATISTISCHES PRAXIS" PRESENT DATA ON GDR AGRICULTURE BUT ACKNOWLEDGED THAT DATA APPEAR MANY MONTHS AFTER FACT AND WITHOUT VERY MUCH DETAIL.

5. THE SUBJECT OF PREPARING SEVERAL ARTICLES IN FOREIGN AGRICULTURE MAGAZINE WAS ALSO RAISED BY AGATT, WHO MENTIONED THAT HE NEEDED INFORMATION ON SUCH SUBJECTS

AS PLANNING, PRODUCTION AND TRADE AND THAT PICTURES WOULD ALSO BE USEFUL. HE ALSO MENTIONED THAT A COMPLIMENTARY SUBSCRIPTION TO THE MAGAZINE WOULD BE INITIATED FOR MUENCH. MUENCH REPLIED THAT HE WOULD BE PLEASED TO RECEIVE THE MAGAZINE AND ALSO SEEMED TO VIEW FAVORABLY THE PROSPECT OF SUCH A SERIES OF ARTICLES (PERHAPS PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS ON THIS MATTER IN FOREIGN MINISTRY AND IN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE HAD PREPARED GROUNDWORK). HE STATED THAT HE WOULD

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R 291107Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7262
INFO AMEMBASSY WARSAW
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GATHER THIS INFORMATION AND HE COULD DELIVER IT AT THE TIME OF THE FORTHCOMING AGRICULTURAL PLANNING AND MARKET DEVELOPMENT VISIT. HE ADDED THAT HE HOPED THAT AN OBJECTIVE ARTICLE WOULD BE WRITTEN AND AGATT ASSURED HIM IT WOULD BE.

6. EXAMPLE OF NEED FOR INFORMATION, AGATT SAID, ARE REPORTS WHICH STATE U.S. AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS TO GDR ONLY \$35 MILLION PER ANNUM. ACTUAL LEVEL, INCLUDING TRANSSHIPMENTS FROM W. EUROPE DESTINATIONS, ESTIMATED OVER \$300 MILLION. MUENCH FULLY CONCURRED.

7. AGATT MENTIONED THAT HE HAD JUST COMPLETED TWO VISITS TO VIEW AGRICULTURE PRODUCING AREAS OF GDR IN THE MAGDEBURG-LEIPZIG-FRANKFURT ON ODER AREA. HE SAID THAT HE WAS IMPRESSED WITH THE FERTILITY OF THIS AREA AND HAD NOTED THAT WINTER GRAIN CROPS APPEARED TO BE IN GOOD SHAPE BUT THAT THE DRY, COLD SPRING MAY HAVE HAD SOME NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE SUMMER GRAIN CROP. MUENCH SAID THAT TWO-THIRDS OF THE TOTAL GRAIN PLANTINGS

WERE COMPRISED OF WINTER GRAINS AND THAT THESE HAD
PROGRESSED WELL THROUGH THE WINTER AND WERE IN GOOD
CONDITION. THE DRY, COLD SPRING HAD, HOWEVER, RETARDED
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THE GROWTH OF THE SPRING CROP AND THERE WAS SOME CONCERN
OVER THIS SITUATION. MUENCH POINTED OUT THAT THE
SUMMER GRAINS HAD FARED POORLY IN 4 OF LAST 5 YEARS SO
THAT CURRENT SITUATION IS NOT AT ALL UNUSUAL. THE
GENERAL IMPLICATION WAS THAT THIS YEAR PROMISES TO BE A
SOMEWHAT AVERAGE YEAR IN CROP PRODUCTION ALTHOUGH IT IS
OBVIOUSLY FAR TOO EARLY TO MAKE ANY CONCRETE ESTIMATES
OF DEVIATION FROM LAST YEAR'S PRODUCTION OF 8.65 MILLION
M.T. OF GRAIN, 10.6 MILLION M.T. OF POTATOES, AND
8.3 MILLION M.T. OF SUGAR BEETS.

8. MUENCH CONTINUED THAT GDR AGRICULTURE IS GENERALLY
DIVIDED INTO THREE SEPARATE BELTS. THE SOUTHERN BELT,
COMPRISING THE AGRICULTURALLY RICH AREA FROM MAGDEBURG
TO LEIPZIG AND BEYOND IS GENERALLY DEVOTED TO WHEAT AND
SUGAR BEETS, ALTHOUGH EXTENSIVE POTATO PLANTINGS WERE
OBSERVED BY THE AGATT IN THIS AREA. THE CENTRAL AREA,
WHICH IS SANDIER, HAS A HEAVIER CONCENTRATION OF BARLEY,
RYE AND POTATOES, WHILE THE NORTHERN AREA, WHICH CONTAINS
SOME RICH LAND, IS MOSTLY DEVOTED TO PASTURE AND MIXED
CROPPING. MUENCH SAID THAT THE GDR CLASSIFIES ITS
LAND ON A SCALE OF ZERO TO 100 AND THAT IN THE RICH
SOUTHERN BELT A GOOD DEAL OF THE LAND RANGES BETWEEN
70-95, HOWEVER, THERE IS GREAT VARIATION AND EVEN IN
THIS REGION CERTAIN AREAS ARE CLASSIFIED NO HIGHER THAN
20. CONSEQUENTLY, IT BECOMES VERY DIFFICULT TO MEASURE
PRODUCTION ON THE BASIS OF A FEW SAMPLES.

9. MUENCH WAS OBVIOUSLY PLEASED IN DISCUSSING THE RAPID
ADVANCE IN THE GDR IN CONSUMPTION OF MEAT. HE STATED
THAT IN 1977 PER CAPITA MEAT CONSUMPTION WAS MEASURED
AT 86.3 KILOGRAMS, BUT THAT THIS INCLUDED CONSUMPTION
BY TOURISTS AND TRANSIT VISITORS. HE ESTIMATED THAT
ACTUAL PER CAPITA CONSUMPTION WAS SOMEWHAT BELOW 80
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KG. PER CAPITA.

10. THE FINAL MAJOR SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION WAS THE
FORTHCOMING VISIT OF THE AGRICULTURAL PLANNING AND
MARKET DEVELOPMENT GROUP. DETAILS OF THE SCHEDULE WERE
CONFIRMED AS WERE TRANSPORTATION AND OTHER ARRANGEMENTS.

THE SCHEDULE IS AS DESCRIBED IN REF. B, WITH THE ONLY CHANGE BEING THAT GROUP WILL DEPART FOR GRAIN COLLECTIVE AT LEIPZIG AT 7:00 AM MAY 10, INSTEAD OF AT 8:30 AM. THE TRIP WILL TAKE NEARLY 3 HOURS EACH WAY, AND IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THE RETURN TO BERLIN WILL BE MUCH BEFORE 8:00 PM. THE AGATT ADDED THAT KELLY HARRISON, THE GENERAL SALES MANAGER OF USDA AND HEAD OF FAS MARKET DEVELOPMENT, HAD AGREED TO POSTPONE HIS DEPARTURE SO AS TO ATTEND THE THURSDAY, MAY 11 MEETING AT THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE. MUENCH INDICATED THAT HE WAS PLEASED WITH THIS DEVELOPMENT.

11. AGATT EXPRESSED HIS PLEASURE OVER THE ARRANGEMENTS AND REMINDED MUENCH THAT THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THE MISSION WOULD BE TO DEVELOP MEANS OF COOPERATION WITH THE GDR IN A 5-YEAR FRAMEWORK. THE FOCUS OF INTEREST WOULD BE ON ANIMAL FEEDING SECTOR. HE SAID THAT HE REALIZED FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS WITH DR. SCHMIED THAT IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO VISIT AN ACTUAL ANIMAL FEEDING OPERATION BUT THAT HE HOPED THAT THIS SUBJECT COULD BE DISCUSSED IN SOME DETAIL AT THE VARIOUS MEETINGS. MUENCH REPLIED THAT THE GRAIN COOPERATIVE NEAR LEIPZIG PRODUCED GRAIN LARGELY TO SUPPLY ANIMAL SECTOR AND THAT THE VISITORS WOULD FIND THE OPERATION OF SUBSTANTIAL INTEREST TO THEM. HE ALSO SAID THAT

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INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 EB-08 COME-00 CIAE-00 INR-10
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-----112052 291241Z /10

R 291107Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BERLIN
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THIS SUBJECT COULD BE DISCUSSED IN DETAIL AT GRAIN COLLECTIVE AND AT MEETING AT MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE NEXT DAY. MUENCH SAID THAT COLLECTIVE NEAR LEIPZIG WAS CHOSEN AS AN AVERAGE OPERATION SO AS TO GIVE VISITORS

AN ACCURATE VIEW OF GDR AGRICULTURE. HE STATED CATEGORICALLY THAT THIS WAS NOT A SHOWPLACE OPERATION DESIGNED TO IMPRESS VISITORS.

12. MUENCH ALSO EXPLAINED THAT IT WAS VERY DIFFICULT IN GDR TO VISIT ACTUAL ANIMAL FEEDING AND ANIMAL PRODUCTION OPERATIONS BECAUSE OF VETERINARY PROBLEMS. IN THE GDR, THE LARGE SCALE OF OPERATIONS, WHERE HUNDREDS AND THOUSANDS OF ANIMALS ARE RAISED IN SINGLE OPERATIONS, MAKES THE DISEASE PROBLEM A VERY SERIOUS ONE. HE SAID THAT BATHING AND CHANGING OF CLOTHES WAS A BASIC REQUIREMENT FOR SUCH VISITS. HE DID NOT PRECLUDE, HOWEVER, EVENTUAL VISITS TO FEEDING OPERATIONS. BOLEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AGRICULTURE, AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, VISITS, MEETING REPORTS, FOREIGN TRADE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 29 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BERLIN02986
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780183-1046
Format: TEL
From: BERLIN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978042/aaaaabhy.tel
Line Count: 291
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 4b78bca7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AGRE
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 6
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 BERLIN 2444, 78 BERLIN 2531
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2857244
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AGATT INTRODUCTORY VISIT, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE
TAGS: EAGR, GC
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4b78bca7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014